



Mentoring and Safeguarding Policy

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I. Introduction to the European Leadership Forum Mentoring and Safeguarding Policy

A. The Forum's Vision and Mentoring Relationships

The European Leadership Forum's vision is to unite, equip, and resource Evangelical leaders across Europe to renew the biblical church and evangelise Europe. Thus, at its annual meetings, its networked events across Europe, and through its Year-Round Mentoring strategy, the Forum seeks to facilitate informal support networks and friendships as well as more formal leader-to-leader mentoring and partnerships. Relationships are at the heart of the Forum strategy.

B. The Need for a Mentoring and Safeguarding Policy

1. Mentoring Trust and Power

Mentoring is an intentional but flexible relationship of trust in which one person (the mentor) enables another (the mentee) to develop their potential and gifting for the service of God's Kingdom. This mentoring happens both one-to-one and in group contexts. The Forum recognises, however, that wherever one person seeks advice, mentoring, or support from another, there is a difference of power and an implied hierarchy in the relationship that could lead to inappropriate behaviour.

2. Inappropriate Mentoring

There are several ways in which these relationships can become inappropriate or even abusive. First, over-directive advice that is given without sufficient thought or reflection may be serving personal needs for control and authority on the part of the mentor, rather than the real needs of the person who seeks their help. Second, misunderstanding about the aims of a leader-to-leader relationship may lead to unnecessary emotional hurt, particularly where sensitive emotional issues may be involved or the mentor attempts to deal with issues outside his/her knowledge and experience. Third, there is the risk of inappropriate emotional bonds developing between the mentor and mentee, leading to unhealthy dependencies and, in some extreme cases, the possibility of inappropriate sexual behaviour.

C. The Forum's Commitment to Safeguarding

The European Leadership Forum recognises the need to ensure safe, caring, and effective relationships for adults being mentored. Therefore, we have developed this Mentoring and Safeguarding Policy that includes: Mentoring Guidelines for Safe and Effective Relationships; Forum Criteria for Mentors; and Forum Mentee Criteria.

II. Mentoring Guidelines: Safe and Effective Relationships

Given the variety of formal and informal mentoring relationships that may take place during the Forum annual meetings, networks, and initiatives, it is not possible or desirable to develop detailed guidelines that try to cover all eventualities. However, the following broad

principles should guide all mentoring relationships and **the Forum requires all Forum mentors, speakers, and other Forum leaders to have read and to abide by them.**

A. Recognise the risks

The most important principle is to recognise that all relationships that involve disclosure of personal information and the seeking or offering of advice involve an imbalance of power. They therefore carry the risk for inappropriate behaviour and it is critical that all those involved in ELF activities recognise this risk and take steps to minimize it.

B. Manage expectations and ensure there is a shared understanding of the nature and aim of the meeting

The aims of any meeting between a mentor and mentee should be clarified to ensure a shared understanding and to avoid raising unrealistic expectations. For example, the aims should be realistic given the limited time and number of sessions that is likely to be available at Forum events. Forum mentoring can involve a single meeting, but it can also involve multiple mentoring meetings throughout the year. Regardless of the number of meetings, it is important to agree to the scope and aims of the mentoring session and to make the boundaries clear.

C. Ensure that you have oversight and accountability

All mentors offering regular mentoring or structured support/advice should be in an accountable relationship in which they receive support and informal supervision for their work. This need not be over-formalised and the level of accountability will depend on the type of mentoring being undertaken. For example, a pastor could let their elder board know. A supervisor at a missionary agency could be informed. It is important, however, that all those involved in mentoring should be able to seek advice and support when they need it.

D. Remember that standards differ between cultures

It is important to be aware of cross-cultural differences regarding what is considered appropriate. That is why it is advisable to err on the safe side, and to ensure that both parties are comfortable with the circumstances before the session begins. For example, if meeting with someone of the opposite sex, we ask that you never be alone in a private setting, and never engage in physical touch. Also, asking inappropriate questions of a sexual nature would never be acceptable. And regardless of the cultural context, physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse is never acceptable.

E. In the event of a complaint or concerns

If either party in a mentoring relationship is uncomfortable or has a complaint or concern, this should, if possible, be discussed and resolved between the parties in the first instance. It is often possible to clarify a misunderstanding or correct a false impression between parties. Even if this is the case, we want there to be accountability in the mentoring process. When there is a concern or complaint, we ask that the mentor or mentee please not talk about the issue with others, but write the Forum Mentoring Advisor at confidential@euroleadership.org to ensure that we monitor the issue. Tony Myrick, who was a pastor for 20 years and currently serves as FOCL Vice President of Forum Strategy and Education, will receive and address these concerns.

If the concerns in any way involve the Forum Mentoring Advisor, then the report should be made to: Greg Pritchard, President of Forum of Christian Leaders at gpritchard@euroleadership.org.

III. Forum Criteria for Mentors: Who is a Forum Mentor?

The following criteria are intended to facilitate the process of selecting appropriate mentors for Forum Mentoring. There are four main characteristics that are necessary for a European Leadership Forum mentor:

A. Maturity in Christ

In order for Forum mentors to lead others to maturity in Christ, they must be mature themselves. While it can be difficult to gauge another's walk with the Lord, we are looking for characteristics of maturity in mentors such as a deep love for God, a love for people, and evidence of the fruit of the Spirit.

B. Experienced Mentor

Forum Mentoring only recruits mentors who are already actively mentoring others. The Forum looks for leaders who have experience in helping leaders to develop in maturity and use their gifts for God's glory.

C. Adaptability in Leadership

Forum Mentoring is broadly defined in that participants may seek various outcomes, ranging from specific directional advice to more of a listening ear. While some leaders are seeking specific skills-based advice or strategic input, others are isolated and seeking someone who will speak empathetically into their situation and pray with them. Because of this, Forum mentors should have the ability to listen, recognize what is needed from the leader in a particular area, and adapt.

D. Knowledge and Skills

Finally, the mentor should be knowledgeable and gifted in their particular area(s) of ministry so they are able to answer questions from the mentee to the best of their ability. See the detailed list of the various types of Forum Mentoring. Because many of the mentoring categories are skills-based, this area is crucial for the session to be effective.



IV. Forum Mentee Criteria: How Do We Grow as Jesus' Disciples?

The European Leadership Forum invests in leaders who are eager to learn and grow to maturity and to be used by God. In the Parable of the Sower in Luke 8:4-15, Jesus describes the good soil as *“those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience”* (v. 15). There are four characteristics that Jesus identifies as necessary to grow as a disciple:

A. Teachability, or having a “good heart,” involves the desire to learn and seek after the truth and wisdom of God with humility. In the gospels, we see that Jesus honours the requests of those seeking growth and rebukes those who are not teachable (have a hard heart). Being teachable means pursuing opportunities to learn and grow and being willing to accept criticism and feedback.

B. Honesty in heart means seeing ourselves as we are and acknowledging our sinfulness. Fear of being found out and the stress caused by hiding from others, God, and even oneself results in profound brokenness. What marks a mature believer then is not the absence of failure, but the ability to admit mistakes and the desire to learn from them. Honesty involves godly sorrow that leads to repentance, forgiveness, and faithfulness. It is a determination to recognize and tell the truth to yourself, God, and other people.

C. Faithfulness is essential for effective ministry. If someone isn't faithful, they will never be fruitful regardless of how teachable they are or how much they acknowledge their weaknesses. Jesus describes those who are faithful in the parable of the wise man. He faithfully built on a solid foundation and as a result was able to survive the storms. Without faithfulness, someone never puts into action specific plans or strategies to grow. Our faithfulness needs to flow from love and thankfulness that we are saved by faith alone. But biblical faith is not alone; it flows into faithfulness.

D. Perseverance is patience, steadfastness, and endurance in response to pain, difficulties, and opposition. Endurance is a trust in God through a situation which cannot be changed. Perseverance is a long courage. In Philippians 3:10, Paul says, *“That I might know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering becoming like him in his death.”* Paul is speaking of a desire to show forth the Lord's character -- to glorify God -- and because of this he is willing to endure difficulties. It is only when we value something outside ourselves (i.e. maturity in Christ) that we are able to persevere. Pain and suffering are a part of the Christian life as we persevere and are refined. As the old hymn explains, we are to *“trust and obey, for there is no other way.”*

While no one is perfect, we hope that mentees will show evidence of these criteria in the mentoring relationship, and that Forum mentors will evaluate mentees' desire to grow in Christ based on these criteria. In this way, we believe Forum Mentoring will be a fruitful experience for both mentors and mentees.

V. Accountability Agreement for Forum Mentor and Mentee

I have read and agree to abide by the European Leadership Forum Mentoring and Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines.

While the intention of extended Forum One-on-One Mentoring is to further connect leaders to facilitate an independent relationship, the European Leadership Forum is committed to safeguarding relationships, and recognizes that issues may arise in the mentoring process. Because of this, the mentor or the mentee commits to contact Tony Myrick, who was a pastor for 20 years and currently serves as FOCL Vice President of Forum Strategy and Education, at confidential@foclonline.org at any point for consultation or to report a mentoring issue.

If the concerns in any way involve the Forum Mentoring Advisor, then the report should be made to: Greg Pritchard, President of Forum of Christian Leaders at gpritchard@euroleadership.org.